

His Majesties
GRACIOUS
S P E E C H,
Together with the
Lord Chancellors,
To both Houses of
P A R L I A M E N T,

On Thursday the 23^d of May, 1678.

Published by His MAJESTIES Command.



His Majesty's

GRACIOUS

SIR JOHN

Wrote with

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My Lords and Gentlemen,

When I met you last, I asked your Advice upon the great Conjunctions abroad. What return you Gentlemen of the House of Commons made Me, and whether it was suitable to the end I intended: (which was the saving of Flanders.) I leave it to your selves in cold blood to consider. Since I asked your Advice, the Conjunctions abroad, and Our Distempers (which influenced them so much) have driven things violently on towards a Peace, and where they will end I cannot tell, but will say this onely to you, That I am resolved, as far as I am able, to save Flanders either by a War, or a Peace, which way soever I shall find most conducing thereto, and that must be judged by Circumstances as they play from abroad. For My own part, I should think being Armed were as necessary to make Peace, as War: And therefore if I were able, would keep up My Army and My Navie at Sea for some time, till a Peace were concluded, if that must be. But because that will depend upon your Supplies, I leave it to you to consider, whether to provide for their Subsistence so long, or for their Disbanding sooner, and to take care in either Case, not to discourage or use ill so many wor-

thy Gentlemen, and brave Men, who came to offer their Lives and Service to their Countrey upon this occasion, and in pursuit of your own Advices and Resolutions.

I must put you likewise in mind of a Branch of My Revenue, which is now expiring; and of another greater, which is cut off by a Clause in the Poll Bill; as also of the two hundred Thousand pounds taken up upon the Credit of the Excise at your request: And I desire your Resolutions may be speedy, because the present necessity requires it; and I shall consent to any reasonable Bills you shall offer Me for the Good and Safety of the Nation.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

I shall say no more, but only to assure you, whatsoever some ill men would have believed, I never had any Intentions but of Good to you, and to my People, nor ever shall, but will do all that I can for your Safety and Ease, as far as you your selves will suffer Me. And since these are My Resolutions, I desire you will not drive Me into Extremities, which must end ill both for You and Me, and (which is worst of all) for the Nation, which We ought all to have equal Care of: Therefore I desire We may prevent any Disorders, or Mischief that may befall them by Our Disagreements; And in case they do, I shall leave it to God Almighty to Judge between Us, who is the occasion of it.

One thing more I have to add, and that is, to let you know, That I will never more suffer the Course and Method of Passing Laws to be changed; and that if several Matters shall ever again be tacked together in one Bill, that Bill shall certainly be lost, let the Importance of it be never so great.

The rest I leave to My Lord Chancellor.

The Lord Chancellor's SPEECH

My Lords, and you the Knights, Citizens, and
Burgeſſes of the Houſe of Commons,



That which remains to be ſaid by His Majesties Command, will fall under these Considerations; The present State of Christendom, in reference to a General Peace; Then the Influence that Peace is like to have upon us; And, The necessity of returning to some better kind of Intelligence amongst our selves then we had when we parted last.

The Advances which have been made abroad towards a Peace, though they may have been hastened by some late Occurrences, yet they were long since meditated and prepared there: for when the States General did perceive, that though they had strained themselves to the utmost, and exceeded all the proportions which by their Treaty they were bound to furnish, yet the Spaniards failed them in every Point, not only in the Subsidies they were obliged to pay, but in the very Strength and Forces they stood engaged to set out, insomuch that all their Towns and Garrisons were so far from being in any tolerable posture to receive an enemy, that they remained as perfectly defenceless, as if they were intended to be abandon'd, the States resolved to seek all the occasions they could of coming out of the War, and to lay hold on the first that should offer it self.

To this end, they did all the last year sollicite His Majesty to endeavour a Peace, and they would then have taken such a Peace as now they seek: But His Majesty thought he had done great service to the Christian World, when he had gained two Points upon them; First to Model and Concert with them the Terms and Articles of a better Peace, and then in prospect of that Peace (and without which it could never have been gain'd) To enter into a League Offensive and Defensive with His Majesty, to obtain that Peace by force, if it could not be had otherwise.

And while things stood upon this Foot, and some preparations were making towards it, there was no small hopes of putting a considerable stop to the growth of the power of France.

For though the Dutch were still inclin'd to accept of Peace, and were harkning after the French Propositions at Nimwegen: Yet such were His Majesties resolutions to hold them to their League, and so constant were all his refusals to hearken to such a Peace, or to have any part in it, that they must of necessity at last have been obliged to continue in the War some way or other.

But when once it was heard abroad that this League, which was the only thing by which His Majesty could oblige the States, had been so ill understood at home, as to meet with some very unfitting and very undeserv'd Reflections; As soon as it had taken air, and they understood, that there was a Resolution to give

give no Money until satisfaction given in matters of Religion, which in all Countreys are the longest Debates that can be entered upon, and at this time above all others should least have been stirr'd: And when at last the King had received an Address, which they took to be of such a nature as was never seen or heard of before in any State or Kingdom in the World, and had proceeded so far to express his Resentment of it:

Then they concluded with themselves, that it was in vain to rely any longer upon *England*, for *England* was no longer it self: Then all sides began to wish for Peace, even *Spain* as well as *Holland*: and if the Cessation which is endeavoured to be made in order to it, take effect, as in all likelihood it will, we may conclude that the Peace will soon follow.

The Influence such a Peace will have upon our Affairs, is fitter for Meditation than Discourse: Onely this is evident, That by the Preparations We have made for War, and the Prohibitions We have made of Trade, We have given no small provocations to a Mighty King, who may be at leisure enough to resent them if he please. And therefore it will import us so to strengthen Our selves both at home and abroad, That it may not be found a cheap or easie thing to put an Affront upon Us.

The first Step in order to this, is to preserve a State of Peace and Unity at home, which is now more necessary then ever. He that foments Division now, does more mischief to his Countrey then a Forreign Enemy can do, and disarms it in a time when all the Hands and all the Hearts We have, are but enough to defend Us.

No fears of Arbitrary Government can justify, no Zeal to Religion can sanctifie such a Proceeding.

It hath been so stale a Project to undermine the Government, by accusing of endeavouring to introduce Popery and Tyranny, that a man would wonder to see it taken up again.

Have We forgotten that Religion and Liberty were never truly lost. That they were made a handle and pretence for Sedition? Are We so ill Historians as not to remember when Prelacy was called Popery, and Monarchy Tyranny? When the Property of Nobility and Gentry was held to be destructive of Liberty, and that it was a dangerous thing for men to have any sense of their Duty and Allegiance.

Do we know all this, and suffer men without doors to hope by our Division to arrive at the same Times again? Can we endure to see men break the Act of Oblivion every day, by reviving the memory of forgotten Crimes in new Practices?

If Fears and Jealousies can ever become wise and good men, it is onely when there is danger of a relapse. No caution can be too great against the returns of that fatal Distemper from which we have been so lately recovered, especially when some Symptoms of it begin again to appear in Printed Libels, and in several parts of the Nation.

It might perhaps be worth our while to consider, whether we do not bring some kind of scandal upon the Protestant Religion, when we seem so far to distrust the truth and power of it, that after so many Laws that have been past to guard it, after all the miraculous deliverances from the attempts which have been made against it, we should still be afraid of its continuance.

It is no doubt a duty which we owe to God, and to our selves, to the present Age and to Posterity, to improve the opportunities God gives us of fencing our Vineyard, and making the hedge about it as strong as we can. And the King hath commanded me to tell you, that he is ready to concur with us in any thing of this kind, which shall be found wanting, and which the Christian Prudence and Justice of a Parliament can propose as expedient.

But why then do we suffer those abroad to complain of the dangers of Religion, who complain onely for complainings sake?

Hath not the late Act made it impossible, absolutely impossible, for the most concealed Papist that is, to get into any kind of Employment? and did ever any Law since the Reformation give us so great a security as this?

As little cause there is to be Jealous of our Liberties and Properties; nor do they believe themselves who pretend to be afraid of either. Can there be a greater evidence of the Moderation of a Prince, and his Tenderness of the Liberty of the subject, then to suffer, as he does every day, so much Licentious and Malicious Talk to pass unpunish'd? if there be not any one Instance to be found in a whole Reign, of a Man that hath suffered against Law, and but very few examples of those that have suffered by it, shall we endure them that dare say in Coffee-houses and in other publick Places, That the Nation is enslaved.

Let it be lawfull to provoke and challenge the most discontented and the most unsatisfied Spirit in the Kingdom, to shew that time, if he can, since the world began, and this Nation was first inhabited, wherein there were fewer Grievances, or less cause of Complaint then there is at this present: Nay, give him Scope enough, and let him search all Ages and all Places of the World, and tell us if he can, when and where there was ever found a happier People then We are at this day.

And if Malice it self ought to blush when it makes this Comparison, what strange ingratitude both to God and Man are they guilty of, who behave themselves so, as if they could be ill at ease under so temperate a Government!

My Lords and Gentlemen,

The King will not suffer himself to believe it possible, that you should ever forsake him when any Difficulties or Distresses are near him; and therefore he doth with great Assurance expect your Care to preserve him in the Affections of his People, as well as your Concurrence to his present Supplies.

The Forces which have been Raised, and the Ships which have been Set out by your Advice, have been at a vast Charge, and yet it will be no small Expence to Disband them again, and to pay them till they be Disbanded.

That Two hundred thousand pounds which was Borrowed at your Request, remains as a Debt upon the King; unless you acquit your selves of the Obligation which lies upon you to pay it. That Branch of the Revenue which expires next month, will leave the Crown in great want, if it be not continued.

Support as it ought to be: for the Poll-Bill hath Extinguished the Duty upon French Wines and all other Customs arising upon Trade with France; and it is worthy of the Care of a Parliament to make this no longer a Duty, that is His Majesty may see and know that no more shall be paid.

But the King hath told us himself this day, that 'tis not the Business of the Proceedings is to him as considerable as the Matter; and that he will not accept a good Bill, valuable soever it may be, unless it come to him in the old and decent Method of Parliament.

The late way of calling together several Independent and Incoherent Matters in one Session seems to alter the whole Frame and Constitution of Parliaments; and consequently of the Government it self.

It takes away the Kings Negative Voice in a manner, and forces him to take all or none, sometimes one part of the Bill may be as dangerous for the Kingdom, as the other is necessary.

It takes away the Negative Voice of the House of Peers too by the same consequence, dishonours the Lords of that Honour they were born to, The Liberty of Debating and Judging what is good for the Kingdom.

It looks like a Deformation of the Government, and seems to suppose the King and House of Lords to be so ill affected to the Publick, that a good Bill cannot carry it self, without strength and assistance, unless it be helped forward by being Tacked to a Bill that will be necessary.

It does at last give up the greatest share of Legislature to the Commons, and by consequence the chief power of Judging what Laws are best for the Kingdom.

And yet it is a Privilege that may be made use of against the Commons, as well as by them, for if this Method hold, what can hinder the Lords at one time or other from taking advantage of a Bill very grateful to the Commons, and much desired by them, to Tack a new Bill to it of some foreign Matter, which shall not be altogether so grateful, nor so much desired, and then the Commons must take all or none too.

Thus every good Bill shall be dearly bought at last, and one chief end of calling Parliaments The making of good Laws, shall be wholly frustrated and disappointed, and all this by departing from that Method, which the wisdom of our Ancestors prescribed on purpose to prevent and exclude such Inconveniences.

These Innovations the King resolves to abolish, and hath commanded me to say to you that he will.

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happy success of any one Meeting as there does upon this.

If this Session do not repair the Misfortunes, and amend the faults of the last, it will look like a Fatality upon the Nation.

If we do not now strengthen the hands of the Government, and shame the enemies of it, banishing all manner of distrust, we shall be in danger to become, not onely the most miserable but the most unpitied Nation under Heaven.

Let not the whispers or evil surmises of those who ly in wait to deceive, make any of the unhappy occasion of endangering the safety of the Government, by mistrusting it.

He whose house is destroyed by fire, would find but little consolation in saying, the fire did not begin by his means; but it will be matter of perpetual anguish and vexation of heart, to remember that it was in his power to have extinguished it.

Let the world now see, that your zeal to preserve the Government is the same it was when you were ready to die for its Restauration: And know, 'tis an act as Meritorious, and an act of great Duty and Loyalty, to stand between the King and all those practices of Libellers, who tend to create a misunderstanding between him and his Parliament, as 'tis to fight for him this day of Bartel.

Embellish the History of this Parliament, by shewing us the healing vertue of this Session. So shall your Service be acceptable to the King, who never forgets any thing but Injuries. Shall you recommend your selves to Posterity, by transmitting to them the same Peace and quietness you are trusted with.

And the God of Peace and Unity, prosper all your Consultations to the Honour and Happiness of the King, and Joy and Comfort of all his good Subjects.

